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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ELIZABETH WARREN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, You are the fountain of every blessing. Thank You for this good land with her hills and valleys, her fertile soil, her trees, plains, and mountains. Lord, we are grateful for the brilliant colors of the changing seasons. Inspire us to strive to become a great nation full of truth and righteousness.

Lord, give our leaders the wisdom to honor Your Name by living with integrity and humility. Teach them to express in words and deeds a spirit of justice for the glory of Your Name.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 17, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ELIZABETH WARREN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. WARREN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Brian Eddie Nelson, of California, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, later today, the Senate is scheduled to take the first procedural step to begin consideration of the annual defense bill.

Our Republican colleagues have said for weeks that we need to move quickly to take up the NDAA and pass it through the Chamber.

This morning, we are continuing to work with our Republican colleagues to strengthen the substitute with as many amendments from Senators as possible. We are making really good progress, and so we will give the Armed Services Committee more time this

morning to review the text and come to a final agreement.

But the Senate needs to move forward on this bill, and quickly. With so much bipartisan interest in getting NDAA done soon, I see no reason why we can't finish this legislation or come to an agreement to finish this bill quickly.

I thank my colleagues from both sides of the aisle, and especially our committee chairs. I thank them because they are propelling this important legislation forward.

BUILD BACK BETTER AGENDA

Now on Build Back Better—I want to return to a comment made recently by the other side that crystalizes the difference between how the two parties see today's challenges.

"A gold mine." "A gold mine." Those three words were used by my colleague, the junior Senator from Florida, when talking about Americans struggling with rising costs. A gold mine for them.

If you want to know why Americans can get frustrated with Washington, look no further than the comments like the one from the gentleman from Florida.

The Republicans, who voted for a giant tax break for millionaires and billionaires, don't have any solutions for working families, but they see political gold in exploiting their struggles.

Families are still struggling to pull themselves out of a once-in-a-century economic crisis brought about by COVID. They want to pay less for things like groceries, healthcare, prescription drugs, and childcare. They want us to find ways to make that happen, and that is just what Democrats are doing in Build Back Better. But, unfortunately, Republicans appear more interested in politics than progress.

It is simple: If we want to fight inflation, if we want to create more jobs—so many businesses are short of workers—and if we want to lower costs and

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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